

Mijikenda language

Mijikenda is a Bantu dialect cluster spoken along the coast of East Africa, mostly in Kenya, where there are 1.9 million speakers (2009 census) but also in Tanzania, where there are 100,000 speakers. The name *Mijikenda* means "the nine settlements" or "the nine communities" and refers to the multiple language communities that make up the group.^[4] An older, derogatory term for the group is *Nyika* which refers to the "dry and bushy country" along the coast.^[4]

Varieties

The New Updated Guthrie List from 2009^[5] lists the following varieties and Guthrie codes as part of the Mijikenda cluster:

- E72 – North Mijikenda (Nyika)
 - E72a – Giryama [nyf]
 - E72b – Kauma
 - E73c – Chonyi [coh]
 - E73d – Duruma [dug]
 - E73e – Rabai
 - E73F – Jibana
 - E72G – Kambe
 - E72H – Ribe
- E73-732 – South Mijikenda
 - E73 – Digo [dig]
 - E731 – Segeju [seg]
 - E732 – Degere

The Degere are former hunter-gatherers like the Cushitic Waata, and are said to have once spoken a Cushitic language.

The Ethnologue^[6] lists the following variety groupings:

- [coh] – Chonyi, Jibana
- [dug] – Duruma
- [dig] – Digo
- [nyf] – Giryama, Ribe, Kambe, Chwaka, Rabai, Kauma
- [seg] – Segeju

Ethnologue's 'Duruma' may refer to the same thing as Maho's 'Degere', as the Degere are variously reported to speak Duruma, Digo, or a similar dialect of their own.

Mijikenda	
Native to	Kenya, Tanzania
Region	Mombasa and Kwale districts in Kenya; Muheza and Tanga districts in Tanzania
Ethnicity	Mijikenda, Chonyi, Digo, Giryama, Jibana, Duruma, Kambe, Kauma, Ribe, Rabai
Native speakers	1.9 million (2009 census) ^[1]
Language family	Niger–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Atlantic–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Volta–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Benue–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Bantoid <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Southern Bantoid <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Bantu <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Northeast Coast Bantu <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Sabaki <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Mijikenda
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Variously: <div> <div>coh – Chonyi</div> <div>dig – Digo</div> <div>dug – Duruma</div> <div>nyf – Giryama</div> <div>seg – Segeju</div> </div>
Glottolog	miji1238 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/miji1238) ^[2]
Guthrie code	E.72, 73, 731, 732 ^[3]

Clicks

Clicks have been reported in ideophones from two dialects of Mijikenda: Digo and Duruma. (It is not known if they occur in the others.) These are *tsya!* /ṽǎ/ 'scram!' and /ṽakule/ 'minute'. It is not known if these have any connection with the neighbouring Cushitic language Dahalo.

References

1. Chonyi (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/coh/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
Digo (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/dig/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
Duruma (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/dug/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
Giryama (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/nyf/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
Segeju (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/seg/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Mijikenda" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/miji1238>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Jouni Filip Maho, 2009. New Updated Guthrie List Online (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180203191542/http://goto.glocalnet.net/mahopapers/nuglonline.pdf>)
4. Heine, Bernd; Möhlig, Wilhelm J.G. (1980). *Language and Dialect Atlas of Kenya vol 1*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag. pp. 17–22. ISBN 3-496-00144-5.
5. Maho, Jouni Filip. "New Updated Guthrie List" (https://brill.com/fileasset/downloads_products/35125_Bantu-New-updated-Guthrie-List.pdf) (PDF).
6. "Ethnologue" (<https://www.ethnologue.com/subgroups/e>).
 - Walsh, M.T. (2006). "A Click in Digo and its Historical Interpretation" (<https://www.scribd.com/doc/14444122/A-Click-in-Digo-and-its-Historical-Interpretation>), *Azania*, 41.

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